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THERE IS POWER IN YOUR MIND

A Series of Four Lessons Devoted to:

I. PRINCIPALS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

III. DEVELOPING CREATIVE ABILITY

II. DEVELOPING MENTAL STRENGTH

IV. DEVELOPING MENTAL HEALTH



LESSON III.

Mayan Revelation Number 281

DEVELOPING CREATIVE ABILITY

Stimulate Creative Thought

Work, Work, Work

Expose Your Mind to the Infinite

Maintain Serenity

Harness Your Inspirations

Beloved Perfectioner:

We now approach the third Lesson in our Series, THERE IS POWER IN YOUR MIND.

When we consider the power of man to make cloth out of chemicals and to extract fuel, dyes and perfume from crude oil, we are impressed by the creative ability of the human mind. When we read the plays of Shakespeare, or look at the paintings of Raphael and Michelangelo, we wonder that men could conceive such beauty and could translate it into art. When we see a jet plane speed across the sky we stand in awe that individuals like ourselves discovered how to construct heavier-than-air craft which can carry two hundred passengers above the clouds, traveling faster than sound.

This Lesson will trace the steps that are commonly followed as a person breaks out of the rut of the familiar and uses his mind to create something

altogether new. We will consider the testimony of men and women of genius. We will also endeavor to see how people of average talent can develop and use their natural creative ability.

There is power in our minds that we can apply to daily living. We may not be able to write a poem, or compose a lyric, but we can create new designs for our lives. We can evolve a more satisfying philosophy than the one that now guides our thinking. We can translate this into conduct that will bring us increased happiness. We don't need to drift into second-rate habits of behavior. We are so made that we can discover the purposes of the Almighty.

BE PREPARED TO FORM NEW CONCEPTS AND TO ESTABLISH NEW HABITS.

You can become one who not only can stand up under stress and strain, but one who can wrest success, satisfaction and joy from each day's encounter with life.

Join me in the prayer:

PRAYER

Dear Father, We thank Thee that Thou hast so made us that we can think Thy thoughts after Thee. Forgive us when we are content with low levels of living. Spark within us the smouldering fires of divine discontent. Inspire us to seek fresh knowledge and insight. Open before us the way to create new joys and wider avenues of service. In the Master's name we pray, Amen.



STIMULATE CREATIVE THOUGHT

God is our Creator; and He has so made us that we can think His thoughts. He intends for man to have a part in shaping his own destiny. If this were not so God would never have given us the ability to reason and the freedom to choose what we would do.

We need not be victims of circumstance. We have the power either to transform the situations into which we are placed, or to rise above them. We should learn to make the best use of whatever opportunities are given to us. It is equally important for us to learn how to create new ideas and new ideals.

All of us have some measure of creative ability, although when we fail to use it, quite naturally it diminishes. But when we make good use of this talent it blossoms into full flower.

Let us look at the testimony of a few men whose creative power was outstanding. Through case studies made at Cambridge University, in England, under the direction of F. C. Bartlett, combined with research at Harvard University, under the direction of William McDougall, we have a record of the thoughts and study-habits of several eminent authors and scientists of our day.

In response to a questionnaire, Bertrand Russell said that he seldom felt an instinctive urge to create anything, but that he must first do some preliminary spade work. He wrote: "I find that by severe concentration I can plant a topic in my subconscious, so that later on ideas come to me." These ideas, Russell said, often are puzzling, bringing discomfort. "Then comes voluntary thought, which involves great effort." This, he tells us, is followed by a period of quiet meditation in which the thoughts take shape in his subconscious mind. Finally there comes "a solution involving the complete plan of the book."

These steps, followed by an author who wrote numerous volumes of outstanding worth, are of special interest because they are in keeping with the thought-pattern of many men and women of genius whose creative work has enriched our lives. Similar steps may well form the basis for your efforts as you endeavor to develop creative ability - whether this is to be applied to your work, to your hobbies, or to your family and social relationships.

As was mentioned earlier, Bertrand Russell said that he stimulated his creative ability by "planting" an idea deep in his mind. Before any word of a book is written, or any line of a picture is drawn, there must be a purpose in the mind of the author, or the artist. He must have an objective that fans into flame his smoldering desire to compose something new.

Your creative ability, also, is increased as you clarify your purposes. Begin by endeavoring to see clearly that which you desire to produce. This might be a house you want to build and furnish. Or it might be a home that you would transform from a place of discord and tension into a haven where understanding, mutual interest, and good-will prevail.

Dr. Joseph L. Walsh, eminent Harvard mathematician, says that at this stage it is wise to "day dream and night dream incessantly." This helps to clarify our aims, and to visualize perfectly that which we want to create.

An engineer may dream of a magnificent bridge he will build to span a wide river; you may center your attention upon some broken bridge of understanding that you would mend, or upon your own shattered life which you would find a way to reconstruct.

After your purpose looms before you, there will come the period of hard work. This may call for extensive research, or for sustained effort to grasp your particular problem. It is a period that demands great effort.

Then there comes the time of inspiration. Banting records that his discovery of insulin came in a period of quiescence which followed ardent search. Beethoven declared that when he had worked for days, or weeks, to find the right notes, then, as he relaxed, the melody of the composition would suddenly come to him through "inner hearing."

When you have put forth your best effort, it is well for you to cultivate a mood of listening and to be prepared for insight beyond your own. (This is of utmost importance and will be considered more fully later in the Lesson.)

Finally there should be synthesis of all that has taken place in your mind. Thoughts must be shaped into artistic or useful order. Then they are ready

to be translated into design, science, social problems, or character development.

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WORK, WORK, WORK

Consider, now, the important second step, at which time, vision and enthusiasm are followed by sustained and often tedious labor. Too often our desire to be creative evaporates in wishful thinking. We would like to write, to excel in sports, or to perfect a new technique, but we lack either the impetus to begin or the persistence needed to acquire whatever skill is necessary.

The athlete must train to achieve prowess. The surgeon must study intensively to gain knowledge and dexterity. The philosopher must work to clarify his concepts and to translate his ideas into understandable language. You and I must labor endlessly to fashion whatever we would create - whether it be artistic, or practical.

Many men of genius have acknowledged that they developed their creative ability by tedious work. Mozart said that his melodies became clear as he struggled to apply the rules of counterpoint. "This," he said, "frees my mind, and then my subject gradually enlarges itself."

Thomas Edison was often guided by his "hunches", but these came to him only after endless hours of experimentation. Dogged work stimulated his creative ability. He wrote: "All the problems I have ever tackled and solved have been done by hard, logical thinking ... I speak without exaggeration when I say that I have constructed three thousand different theories in connection with the electric light, each of them reasonable and apparently likely to be true. Yet in two cases only, did my experiments prove the truth of my theory."

In your search for a better plan of work, or for a nobler way of living, you, too, may need to exhaust many possibilities before you find the right pattern for your life. Numerous attempts and logical elimination no doubt will be required as you strive to create new techniques, or new standards.

If you would become an author, use infinite pains in gathering your material. Originality is rooted in wide reading and broad experience. As you carefully classify your notes the pattern of your whole composition will develop.

Creative ability in painting, applied art, or science can be fostered in somewhat the same way. The artist will first make sketches and then painstakingly refine them until the object he wishes to portray comes into being. Imagination must be supplemented by systematic effort.

In the winter the commercial farmer outlines his plan for contour plowing and rotation of crops, while the landscape gardener selects the shrubs and seeds he will plant, picturing how they will look when full grown and in bloom. Both must choose a time for plowing or spading, for raking and fertilizing. Then will come the work of cultivating and weeding and spraying. This must be done not once, but over and over again. By these labors man becomes a partner with God in creating fruit and flowers.

The willingness to weed and to cultivate day after day should be applied

to all creative effort. Consistent endeavor is necessary if you would fashion something of tangible use, or of beauty - or if you would create a new way of life for yourself.

When you want to establish some nobler form of behavior, plant the finest seed-thoughts. Then time after time pull out ideas that are as weeds, threatening to choke your young ideal. By study and meditation cultivate the habit you desire to establish. Keep some book at hand that is a worthwhile guide; and turn to it frequently. Associate with friends who will encourage you as you strive to shape your life into a more worthy form - one that will bring you increased satisfaction and happiness.

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EXPOSE YOUR MIND TO THE INFINITE

In whatever field you are struggling to develop creative ability, do not rely upon your own strength alone. Each day expose your mind and spirit to the sunlight of God's wisdom and love. There is a Power beyond your own from which you can receive help.

From every side we hear testimony that this is true. Edward Gibbon said that the outline for his monumental work, THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE came to him "like a burst of light." The renowned scientist, Hermann von Helmholtz, told a friend that most of the ideas that led to his contributions in physics came after he had investigated the problem from all sides and then dropped it. He said that they never came to him when he was fatigued, but that after sleep, or while walking in the woods, brilliant ideas came unexpectedly, without effort, "like an inspiration."

When they have opened their minds to God the poets have found that the words were GIVEN TO THEM, scientists have felt the HUNCH that led to important discoveries, and men and women in all walks of life have been LED to make the decisions that changed their lives.

Metternich, the great French novelist, attested that wisdom from beyond himself contributed not only to his skill in writing, but to his ability to solve life's problems. On one occasion, upon a return from a wearisome journey, a messenger brought a dispatch that required an important decision. Metternich told the messenger: "You will have to wait for the reply. Let me finish reading the story in my travel bag. Perhaps the answer will come."

Wisdom beyond the human is available to all who seek it. If today there is some area in your life in which you desire to make improvements, don't attempt to rely upon your own insight alone. Expose your mind to the Infinite. Do this in a mood of relaxation and trust.

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Approach God with a sense of His greatness and of your own need. Lay your problem before Him, not trying to wrest an answer, but

expecting that one will come. Remember that God is all-knowing, yet concerned with every detail that puzzles you.

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If your frustration is deep, surrender your will to God's mercy and ask Him to show you the way to rise above apparent defeat. As you do this the answer may suddenly become clear to you. But if this does not occur it is often wise to take a walk, or to become absorbed in other tasks, still believing that the help you need will be forthcoming.

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Frequently it is while you are busy, yet relaxed, that the insight you need will come to you. At other times it will break through when you are at rest, but in a mood of listening.

So when you face difficulties and have done all you can to solve them, quiet your mind and expose your spirit to your Creator. You will be surprised to find how often some solution will appear, and the answer you are seeking will be quite plain. The sceptic would say it comes "out of the blue." The person of faith says: "It comes from God."

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MAINTAIN SERENITY

When you have opened your mind and heart to the Eternal, many of the irritations that hampered your creative ability will evaporate. You will feel more relaxed as you go about your tasks.

Be frequently in an attitude of prayer as you are busy with work that requires a low degree of concentration, and alternate times of strenuous endeavor with brief moments of meditation. This will help you to maintain the poise that is conducive to creative living.

You cannot think clearly or work effectively when the atmosphere around you is filled with tension and animosity. There is a direct relation between your efficiency and the spirit that prevails in the place where you are laboring.

Perhaps you are tempted to say, "The situations in which I am placed are not of my own choosing. I have no control over the moods of my fellow-workers and my family. What they say and do establishes the atmosphere about me. How can I do anything about that?"

You need not take this fatalistic point of view. First be very honest. Ask yourself: "Have I contributed in any way to the tension about me? Have I let jealousy and anger infect my heart and creep into my voice?" If so, stop trying to be the "top-man", or the dictator, and make a sincere effort to serve all with whom you associate.

The Master said: "For he that is least among you all, the same shall be

great." (Luke 9:48).

If your creative ability has been curtailed by destructive emotions, make a sincere effort to break the evil spell that hangs over you: be kind and generous; be cheerful and helpful. Hold fast to the belief that with God's help you can create new attitudes.

You may not be able to change the people about you, but you can change your outlook toward them. When you have dispelled any grievances, your mind will be more receptive to new ideas. When you achieve serenity, your creative ability is doubled.

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HARNESS YOUR INSPIRATIONS

Whatever problem is before you, you are in a better position to cope with it as your purpose becomes clear and your mind becomes poised. Even strong opposition and dire circumstances need not bring ultimate defeat. Nowhere is this more graphically illustrated than in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. When we look closely at the events in the life of the Master we see a perfect example of how even adverse conditions can be shaped to creative ends.

Although Jesus came from a small nation that was under the heel of Rome, He has wielded greater influence than any emperor. Many people looked upon Jesus as the Messiah, but sometimes we forget that our interpretation of this title is far different than that of the Old Testament. Christ saw that the "Deliverer" should be a spiritual leader, not a mighty warrior. By His life as well as His teachings He created a new concept of the Messiah.

Jesus not only envisioned a Kingdom that would be ruled by love; He showed sympathy and concern for each person whom He met. He told His disciples: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:11). He demonstrated this revolutionary principle by taking a basin and towel and washing their feet.

Before the time of Jesus the "cross" was synonymous with disgrace. He made it an instrument for salvation.

From time to time there have appeared national figures who were profoundly influenced by Christ's teachings. Lincoln saw that America could not exist half slave and half free. His vision found concrete expression in the Emancipation Proclamation. Mahatma Gandhi created a new weapon for use in the battle to liberate those who were enslaved: passive resistance. By this power India won her independence.

While a few men and women are privileged to translate their visions into movements that change the way of living for whole nations, all of us have the opportunity to use the power of our minds to transform individual lives. By group effort we can initiate legislative reforms. Singly we can speak out against social injustices. We can stand firm for the moral standards and the personal habits that elevate men and women instead of dragging them down.

Don't allow indifference, or self-indulgence, to prevent you from using your power to help create a better way of life for others, and also for yourself. You can play a part in establishing finer social conditions in your community. You can dispel grievances in your neighborhood, or under your own roof. You can find the zest which comes from creative living.

To summarize: The steps that have been followed by men of genius as they translated desire into tangible results can be made to serve you.

1. Increase your motivation. Clarify your purpose and keep it vividly before you.
2. Accept hard work. Persist in your efforts even when this calls for tireless physical or mental exertion.
3. Do your best; then trust God for the rest. Open your finite mind to the infinite Mind and you will receive wisdom to cope with every baffling problem.
4. Translate inspiration into action. It is futile to take undue satisfaction in idle dreaming.

It should be obvious that the suggested routine must be kept flexible. The time for seeking divine guidance will sometimes precede - instead of follow - the hours devoted to arduous labor, and often will be interspersed with them.

Keep always before you the truth that God has a special work for you to do, and He will give you the wisdom and the strength to do it. As you see the task ahead, accept Divine Power, so your mind and body will be charged with vitality and you will feel surging within you the power to create.

Wipe all doubt, or envy, or pessimism out of your mind. Avoid any secret aim to succeed for the glory it will bring to you personally, and substitute a desire to use your talents in the service of God and your fellow-men. This will bring you more, and ever more, of the happiness that comes through creative living.



AFFIRMATION

With God's help I will be dissatisfied with mediocrity, with discouragement, and complacency. Today I will use my mind and my will to live more creatively.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.